

## CFI Project report: SLU LA PhD's Forum

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### Introduction: about the Forum

The SLU LA PhDs Forum has been part of the SLU Landscape environment since 2018. We connect PhD students from Alnarp and Ultuna whose doctoral studies engage with landscape. As such the Forum helps create a strong network between SOL and LAPP, but also between young researchers. Landscape research as a multidisciplinary field is visible in the range of disciplinary backgrounds amongst the PhD group. The Forum proved a platform to explore the different dimensions of landscape research and to share knowledge and perspectives.

The Forum has a common strategy that conveys its aims:

*Who we are:* The PhD Forum is an inclusive and non-competitive network of PhD students that collaborate on issues that benefits each participant and the group at large.

*How we work:* The Forum always strive to find a balance between external communication and internal discussion, and a transparent decision-making.

*What we do:* Strive towards an inclusive academic conversation on the issues of landscape architecture as PhD research subject. Through trust we provide to each other collegial support, both professional and personal, in a safe-space.

*Our vision:* To make the Forum a self-sustaining and robust culture of collegial support for LA PhD students.

### Activities October 2018 – October 2019

Between October 2018 – October 2019) the forum arranged five major activities, reported below. Plans for Winter 2019 and the coming years are presented in the future road map below.

#### October 2018: Kick off meeting, Alnarp

In connection to the Landscape days in Alnarp, the forum met for a full day workshop on the broad theme “the state of my PhD”. During the day each participant got the opportunity to present the full PhD project and gain reflections and comments from the group. Discussions on delimitations of research interests, methods and theoretical concepts were held as well as reflections regarding common challenges. The workshop captured the fundamental elements of peer-support and co-learning which we aim to develop in the Forum.

#### February 2019: Forum strategy and task plan, Linköping

In February the Forum met up for a strategy session in which common aims were defined. During the meeting the Forum selected representatives for the main roles, facilitator, treasurer and communicator, who are responsible for keeping the forum going during 2019. The roles are to be redeployed each year, so that responsibility rotates and to make sure that the Forum will rest on collaboration and joint efforts. The aim is to strive for a flat and non-competitive organization. Suggestions for activities were collected and a preliminary schedule for 2019 were drawn out.

#### April 2019: Building community workshop, Ultuna

At the Landscape days in Alnarp the Forum arranged a workshop session titled “Building community for young Landscape researchers: planning for a strong PhD experience”. Led by Andrea Conti and Mia Ågren it brought together participants from the PhD community as well as supervisors and other faculty members to discuss challenges and opportunities for creating strong PhD communities. To bring different academic roles together a fruitful discussion on different perspectives and needs were facilitated.

### August 2019: Fieldwork methods workshop. Copenhagen

The autumn semester started with a full day workshop on fieldwork methods in Copenhagen. With instructions from Johan Wirdelöv, participants were asked to dive into a short 2 hour field study in Copenhagen. Focusing on the theme of *time*, participants explored how to study public spaces, mobilities, socio-material relations and knowledge production in 'the field'. After the very empirical and real experience with fieldwork the day continued with discussion on the feeling and experience of doing fieldwork. Discussions touched upon methodological issues, project designs and questions on data, results and validity.

### September 2019: Building community workshop, Ås (During ECLAS doctoral colloquium)

During the Doctoral Colloquium at the annual ECLAS conference the Forum will host a workshop on PhD community and peer-support. The workshop is a redeveloped version of the workshop from the Landscape days in April 2019. With this workshop we aim to express our experiences of creating the PhD forum and how a strong PhD community can strengthen both individual PhD projects but, as we believe, also benefit the academic environment at the university.

### Outcomes

The many different activities held during the year captures the spirit of the PhD Forum. By joint efforts we have created a platform for ventilating everything from research methods, topics theories to organizational and administrative issues of PhD education and PhD collaboration. The activities themselves are a main outcome, but other, more subtle, outcomes needs also to receive recognition. For the individual PhD student the Forum is an opportunity to develop organizational skills. Designing workshops, finding topics which spans disciplinary boundaries, collaborate and share knowledge and experiences are valuable outcomes of engaging in the Forum.

For the Forum as *a network* the activities during the past year have set the format and mode of working within the Forum. A strong collaborative network amongst the participants are crucial for the continual success of the Forum during the years to come.

### Costs

Activity	Activity hours (excluding travel and preparation time)	Spending (travel and other)
Kick off meeting, Alnarp	8	
Strategy meeting, Linköping	8	6156,78
Building community workshop Ultuna	2,5	
Fieldwork workshop, Copenhagen	8	13698,41
Building community workshop, Ås	2,5	
	total hours: 29	Total spending: 19855,19

### Future project roadmap

For the coming year the Forum already has concrete ideas, and ambitions, to continue the activities. A winter 2019 workshop/session/meeting is currently being planned, with the idea of combining a writing retreat with a workshop with an invited speaker. Thoughts on arranging a summer school/workshop together with faculty members from SLU Landscape are slowly forming.

Ambitions of reaching out to other Scandinavian PhD students and communities are forming. The planned workshop at ECLAS 2019 is a starting point for making the Forum known to a wider network. The coming ECLAS at Ultuna in 2020 provides further opportunities for testing interest and establishing a Scandinavian network for landscape PhD's.

The yearly funding from SLU Landscape will ensure that the Forum will be able to meet continuously during the coming years. The support from SLU Landscape and the departments SOL & LAPF are important for the continuation of the Forums activities, and we argue that the Forum itself is of importance to SLU Landscape and the institutions as well. The funding from SLU Landscape Call for Ideas made it possible to arrange our many extensive sessions and workshops. Additional funding was also received from SLU Urban Futures. The uncertainty of future funding from additional sources makes future planning difficult.

### 3 year horizon

- Continuously working to attract, engage and support new PhD students within the SLU Landscape environment to ensure a continuously strong and supportive PhD community
- Continuously working with a ambitious program of activities with workshops and topics which are of interest for participants
- Establishing an international network by making the Forum known amongst Scandinavian PhD students within the landscape field

### 5 year horizon

- In five years, the Forum have become a natural part of PhD education under the flag of SLU Landscape. The Forum provides peer-support and act as space for inclusive academic discussions
- The Forum is also an active part in the academic discussion at the two departments through working for a supportive and inclusive environment and by fostering independent yet supportive PhD students

### CFI process

The process of CFI application has functioned very well. We are glad to have support from SLU Landscape CFI which have been crucial in our steps of launching the PhD Forum as a long term part of SLU Landscape.